



News Release

For Immediate Release:

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Larynx Surgery Leads Woman to “Raise Her Voice” vs. Tobacco

Cancer survivor urges Utah teens to never smoke

(SALT LAKE CITY) – Terrie Hall can no longer swim. She hasn’t blown her nose in eleven years and never will again. When she speaks, a robotic sound emerges. Hall lost her voice box, breathes through a hole in her neck, and endured debilitating radiation treatments and surgeries. All that suffering is due to tobacco addiction.

That’s why the Utah Department of Health TRUTH Campaign and Utah’s local health departments are taking Hall, a cancer survivor and anti-tobacco activist, on a tour of Utah. She will visit Utah high schools and educate students about the dangers of tobacco. Her tools include a Tootsie Roll, a straw, M&Ms, a pair of diseased animal lungs and the sound of her voice.

A smoker since her early teens, Hall started having severe throat pain and saw a doctor. She remembers the devastating diagnosis. “After a grueling biopsy procedure and about 24 hours of waiting, I received word that I had a tumor and they wanted to remove my voice box. It was stage 4 squamous cell carcinoma.”

Beginning in April 2000, Hall underwent a total of 33 radiation treatments. Her addiction was so strong she continued to smoke during the therapy, even though the smoking itself was painful. She completed radiation in June 2000, and was diagnosed with a new cancer six months later. Surgeons removed Terrie’s voice box in January, 2001.

“The sound of Terrie’s voice impacts youth with a message that can’t be erased,” said TRUTH spokesman David Neville. “Her story embodies the ugliness of tobacco addiction.”

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Originally from Michigan, Hall moved to North Carolina – a tobacco-growing state – at 13. She tried smoking for the first time at 14. A varsity cheerleader, Hall’s high school had a designated smoking area and all her friends smoked. She became addicted her senior year.

Later, Terrie began what she calls her “smoking career” – chain smoking even while working, after eating, and up until the moment her head hit the pillow at night. She tried many kinds of cigarettes, and when she finally quit, she was smoking two packs of menthols per day.

Hall will speak at the following locations:

Monday, April 11 - Carbon County

8:30 AM – Carbon High School in Price
10:00 AM – Mont Harmon Junior High in Price
2:15 PM – Helper Junior High in Helper

Tuesday, April 12 - Salt Lake County

10:45 AM – Granite Peaks High School in South Salt Lake City
1:00 PM – Taylorsville High School in Taylorsville

Wednesday, April 13 - Ogden and Garland

9:30 AM – Two Rivers High School in Ogden
1:30 PM – Bear River Middle School in Garland
6:15 PM – Weber Basin Job Corps in Ogden

Thursday, April 14 – Grantsville and Taylorsville

8:15 AM – Grantsville High School in Grantsville
9:30 AM – Grantsville Junior High School in Grantsville
1:00 PM – Hunter High School in West Valley City

The tobacco industry spends \$60 million each year in Utah marketing its deadly drugs. The UDOH Tobacco Prevention and Control Program efforts, combined with local health department efforts, have helped drive the youth smoking rate down by 29 percent since the campaign began in 1999. Ninety percent of adult smokers begin lighting up before age 19 and one in three will eventually die of their addiction. For more information and resources visit www.TruthAgainstTobacco.com.

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The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.